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TIME  
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## LETTERS

### Crossing the Elbe

Sir:

Re your article, "How Berlin Got Behind the Curtain" [Sept. 29]: as the commander of the regiment that established the first successful bridgehead across the Elbe River, I would like to make a few comments.

The bridgehead was established by the 329th Infantry on April 13 at Barby. The bridgehead made at Magdeburg by the 2nd Armored Division on April 12 was knocked back by German armor. The 329th bridgehead was severely counterattacked for three days but held firm, partly because we had rafted all our antitank guns across the Elbe.

After the Ninth Army had breached the Elbe defenses, there was no reason why they should not have continued to Berlin.

While we remained in our bridgehead, a German colonel showed up and asked us to evacuate 18,000 Allied prisoners from the camp at Altengrabow because he had nothing to feed them. We sent the 2nd Battalion 24 miles up the Zerbst-Berlin highway to Altengrabow and rescued them.

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All this took place before the Russians entered Berlin on May 2. I think that had we advanced, Berlin would have been thrown open to us to avoid capture by the Russians.

E. B. CRABILL  
Colonel, U.S.A. (ret.)

Riviera Beach, Fla.

Sir:

Why Berlin got behind the Iron Curtain? Because, unfortunately, Bradley's answer to Eisenhower's question for an estimate of what it would cost to take Berlin was a case of mistaken intelligence.

On April 12, 1945, when the Ninth Army reached the Elbe at Magdeburg, most of Hitler's army commanders were ready for surrender to the West because the whole defense system had broken down. We know this from postwar interrogations of high German civilian and military officers. This shows the error of appraisal that an American march to Berlin would cost 100,000 men. Of course, neither Eisenhower nor Bradley can be blamed, because they had to rely on intelligence reports. The miscalculation of the fighting power of the Nazi units when Germany was already completely disintegrated was no less a myth than the fiction stories of the "Alpine Fortress."

ROBERT M. W. KEMPNER  
Former U.S. Deputy Chief of  
Counsel in Nürnberg

Lansdowne, Pa.

### Selfless Zeal

Sir:

Only a severe space limitation could permit TIME, in its sensitive coverage of the tragedy of Dag Hammarskjöld's death [Sept. 29], to omit all mention of Dr. Heinrich Wieschhoff, who was killed at the same time.

Dr. Wieschhoff, the Director of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs at the U.N., was the Secretary-General's African expert.

Few white men in the world knew as much about Africa as Dr. Wieschhoff. He earned a Ph.D. in African anthropology at Frankfurt, taught at the university's African Institute. He taught anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. During World War II he served as consultant on African affairs in the OSS. He wrote a number of scholarly books on African cultures and colonial policies.

Like his gifted superior, Dr. Wieschhoff was utterly selfless in his zeal for the welfare of others — one way to describe a saint?

NARDI REEDER CAMPION  
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